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Monthly Meeting

6 February 2024 at 2:00 pm

in the Great Hall at Hexham Abbey

Topic: 'Battle of Britain North East'
given by Dennis Fox

Denis Harry Fox is a military history and landscape artist who lives in Durham City. He was born in Seaham in 1944 and studied at Durham University and later at Newcastle University.

Denis retired from teaching art at Emmanuel College, Gateshead in 2011 and since then he has been more involved with producing his own work for exhibitions.

He tells the story of the Battle of Britain in NE England through the medium of his paintings. His artwork has been displayed all over the North East.

The preparation for the work involved many sources including archived documents, logbooks, museums and families of those airmen who took part. He describes it as an emotional journey.



**Just a reminder that if you miss the Monthly Meeting talk,
it is made available on YouTube and all members are emailed the link.**

Message from the Chair

When the speaker did not turn up for our January meeting, I thought the afternoon would turn out to be like one of my worst nightmares. There were 139 people present, in the room and not enough seats but it was a delight that so many members volunteered to contribute to the afternoon. Members taking responsibility is what is best about our u3a. I would like to thank all of you who contributed, two of whom were new members. The talks were greatly appreciated and admired. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to provide a link to these talks because the sound had not recorded.

We have heard from the speaker, he had put the wrong date in his diary and when he realised, couldn't apologise enough. He will now come later in the year and forego his expenses.

We have also been advised that the Abbey are going to purchase more chairs, but if they haven't arrived before our February meeting there will be fold up seats from the Abbey available.

Cecilia Coulson the chair of the Northumbria Region will be attending our February meeting and will introduce herself at the start. It is her plan to visit all the u3a's in the region to learn more about how they operate.

We have our **AGM coming up in March** and I am hoping we will have a good turnout.

There will be **2 motions from the committee**, one concerning a revised constitution and one concerning accommodation in the community centre. They are included in this newsletter.

Members can stand for any of the committee posts all they require is a proposer and seconder.

We need to receive **nominations by 13th February** (21days before the AGM).

I will be standing down, as will Colin Argent as Group-Fixer, Barrie Mellars as Programme Secretary and Sally Hewitt as Publicity Officer.

Sally Hewitt stood down in January and Ally Forster is willing to take on the role.

The remaining members of the committee are willing to stand for another term.

At the AGM we will need to confirm in post our new Treasurer Kate Stephenson and Ally Forster as Publicity Officer.

Barrie Mellars will be standing as Chair.

There will be **2 vacancies on the committee** which I would like your help in filling.

- 1.** The role of **Programme Secretary** with responsibility for managing the monthly meetings and organising speakers.
- 2.** The role of **Group liaison Secretary**, currently known as the group fixer, with responsibility for providing support to current groups and facilitating the development of new groups. This role can be done by two people, but they will need to work well together.

If you would be willing to consider either of these roles, please contact Barrie Mellars or me.

Following the AGM we will be launching the booklet **40 year History of Tynedale u3a** that Barrie Mellars and others have been working on during the year.

Wendy Dale

Committee Motions for the AGM

We have 2 committee motions, and we propose to ensure that all members can vote on them. We will be sending out a postal vote to all members who do not have email with this newsletter. They will be asked to use this vote if they do not plan on attending the AGM. All other members will be sent an electronic link and again advised that they should use it if they are unable to attend the AGM.

If we receive other motions from members within 21 days of the AGM, we will incorporate them in the electronic voting and seek to ensure those with a postal vote have an opportunity to vote.

Motion 1

Following the last AGM, the committee was concerned that the current constitution had not assisted the process of managing a controversial motion. It formed the view that it should be revisited. It found the style was out of step with the national model and had limited scope. The committee, in recommending that we adopt a revised constitution recognises that it will not have an impact on the current running of Tynedale u3a.

The Motion

Tynedale u3a will adopt a revised constitution that is in line with the model recommended by the Third Age Trust. The benefits are that the revised document is more comprehensive and accessible. The current constitution has been subject to piecemeal revisions and is limited in scope. The change is not anticipated to have any consequences for the running of Tynedale u3a.

Motion 2

In the last year with the increasing membership and a reducing number of group rooms available, some groups have been meeting in unsuitable accommodation. Colin Argent has spent time looking at options. One of the options that we became aware of during this process was the option to rent an office at the Community Centre. The cost at the current time would be £217 per month.

The benefits of having an office would be:

1. a meeting room for small groups with good internet access , a screen and other technical equipment
2. a bigger room free for 3 hours a month
3. a reduced rate for the large rooms and any other workspace
4. Free publicity using their sites.

The Committee feel there could be more benefits to members with the association with the community centre and feel that as Tynedale u3a is in a strong financial position it is worth testing this out for a 12-month period.

The committee are bringing this matter to the AGM because it is a departure from recent practice and would like to have the support of the membership. At the current time there isn't an office available, but we know when one is it is likely to be snapped up.

The Motion

Tynedale u3a will rent office accommodation at the community centre in Hexham for a period of 12 months when an office becomes available. The purpose is to support small interest groups who are having difficulty accessing appropriate accommodation and to assist the development of new groups. The benefits will be assessed after one year and if the committee is satisfied that the arrangements are cost effective the rent period will continue and be kept under review.

For Your Diary

We have a range of events planned for the coming months. Some are already scheduled dates and others are yet to be decided. If you haven't done so already please do register your interest in any event and we will contact you when dates are fixed.

Carpet Bowls Hexham Community Centre Friday 23rd February 1 - 3pm

Experienced players and beginners both welcome; guidance will be given to beginners. Refreshments and a soup lunch will be available, pre-booking required, suggested donation for soup is £2.

Dumfries House Saturday 9th March £49.50

A day out at one of Britain's most stately of homes, set in 2,000 acres of land, with an outstanding collection of 18th century furniture. There will be a guided tour of the house and lunch of home made soup, a selection of sandwiches and cakes with tea and coffee.

Coach picks up at Chollerford, Corbridge, Hexham, Haydon Bridge and Haltwhistle.



Barton Grange and Lancashire Canal Cruise 15th May £34.50

Enjoy a scenic country cruise with stunning views of the Bowland Hills along with sightings of the resident canal bird life. Free time to explore the extensive Barton Grange Garden Centre.

Coach picks up Chollerford, Corbridge, Hexham, Haydon Bridge and Haltwhistle.



Blenheim Palace Flower Show 21 - 23 June £289 (show on 22nd)

Set in the surroundings of one of England's finest stately homes, a show full of beautiful plants and garden designs shown at their best to captivate and inspire you. B&B plus dinner, at the 4 star Courtyard Marriott Hotel, Oxford South; single person supplement £70



Being Planned

Egger - A guided tour of the Hexham plant planned for March

Wallington House - behind the scenes in the attics and cellars

Ushaw College, Durham University

Marchmont House, Berwickshire

Auckland Castle

Newcastle City Walks

Once we have all the details for these events, the booking arrangements will be announced at the monthly meeting, put on the Tynedale u3a website and Facebook pages as well as in the newsletter.

**For information, or to register for events please contact
Margaret Earl at - tu3aevents@yahoo.com or by telephone at 01434 689123**

An Additional Talk:

Cleaning the West Allen river of metals from the mining past in the North Pennines

2.00pm on Tuesday April 30th Priory Room at the Abbey

A talk by **Hugh Potter**, the National WAMM (Water & Abandoned Metal Mines) programme lead from the Environment Agency and **Janet Brand** the coal authority project manager has been organised by the Environment Group.

The talk will include:

1. Landscaping choices
2. Procurement
3. Surveys across the seasons
4. Landscapes – peat /National Landscapes
5. Architecture and aesthetics
6. Traffic and weather
7. 3rd party engagement
8. Dynamic rivers
9. Partnership working and aspirations



Nenthead car park river bank completed
© Environment Agency

All are welcome, but you must register online through the Tynedale u3a website 'What's On' section

Sex, Money and Revenge

Members of the Detective Book Club and lovers of Midsummer Murders will identify the three most common motivations for murder. They are powerful motivators so its not surprising fraudsters use them as bait for scam emails and texts.

Sadly, Romance Fraud as it's termed hooks far too many men and women in the hope of having an attractive partner. It could be travel costs or grandma having to go into hospital that spurs requests for money.

For me, the premiums of an Older Woman is not as alluring as it once was and sadly my wife did not share my enthusiasm for her to have a Russian wife. But most of this spam has the bait of links to pictures which instead will just load an app and steal my data.

Money scams come in various forms be it parcel deliveries or a tax or TV licence issue. Then there are the requests to resolve online banking problems from various financial institutions. This is strange as I don't do online banking with anyone which is the best means of protection. I currently have some pain in the backside sending me loads of emails for US banks but the revenge attack I had for I know not what was spam emails in Spanish or Portuguese. Not dangerous but also a pain so it was No Way José. Consequently, despite my young gorgeous body and desire to keep all my financial dealings private, I'm no longer interested in opening emails but just delete many of them.



Mike Foster

NORTH NORTHUMBRIA REGIONAL QUIZ

After the success of our last quiz in July 2023, we have decided to have another one on **20th March 2024 from 2pm - 5pm**. It will be at the same venue, Sunnyside Social Club, except in a larger room.



The event will be similar with Prizes and Refreshments and we would like each u3a to bring a home-baked cake to share, if possible.

Any u3a can send as many teams of four (or less) as they wish, but no spectators or supporters as we would like them to also form teams and join in.

The last quiz was full and we had to turn teams away, so we are going to use a larger room in the Club this time. However, as we still have to say 'first-come : first served' please send in your team entrance fee as soon as you can to secure your team a place.

With rising costs, we will have to charge an entrance fee of £5 per team this time. This can be paid by bank transfer to the details below -

Please send your £5 payment to:

Bank: Barclays Account name: University of the Third Age, Northumbria Region u3a
Sort code: 20-83-69 Account number: 90916382 Reference: Quiz

If you wish, you can also email Bob Pullen of Prudhoe u3a if you have any questions about the event - robertgpullen@gmail.com

Group News

Room Hire

About half of our active groups replied to the message about room hire. The two main options on offer were:

Δ To negotiate preferential hire rates for larger groups in either the Abbey or the Hexham Community Centre

Δ Hire an office for small group meetings in the Hexham Community Centre

At present, there is not enough interest to pursue the first option further.

There is some interest in the office option and a **Committee Motion** to this effect has been tabled for the the AGM in March.

Currently there is not a vacant office, but we understand the turnover in office rental can be quite high.

Colin Group Fixer

Group News

Group Fixer (AKA Group Liaison Secretary)

As Wendy says in the Chair's Report the Group Fixer is stepping down after the AGM in March. I would like to say he is planning to march boldly into the sunset seeking new challenges but, given the current state of the climate, a dejected trudge into the mist and rain seems more likely.

What does this mean? It means there is an opportunity for one lucky person to take on the role of Group Liaison Secretary. Could you be that person? I am sure the position will be hotly contested so I will make a plea now – no fisticuffs please.

As Wendy says in her report please contact Barrrie or her if you are interested in the role. Also, the current Group Fixer will be happy to chat about what is involved over a coffee, so please feel free to get in touch by email or phone - groupfixertynedale@btinternet.com or 07498 798020.

New Groups

Late last year one or two members mentioned they had ideas for new groups. If you are still out there do get in touch please - see contact details above.

Convenors

After the convenors meeting in November I agreed to hold a monthly chat session for new or aspiring convenors. If you would like such a session just let me know.

Colin Group Fixer

German Language Group

We would welcome new members. Ideally members should have some knowledge of German, perhaps at GCSE O Level or equivalent or knowledge gained through work or travel.

Our sessions are a mixture of informal chat and translations from short extracts of German news broadcasts or stories.

We meet at the County Hotel in Hexham on Wednesdays from 2.30 to 4.00 for coffee.

If you are interested, please in the first instance contact us via the Groups Section 'German Language' on the Tynedale u3a website at <https://u3asites.org.uk/tynedale/home>

Peter Coxon

Putting the World Right Group: New World

The Putting the World Right group is full and we're now seeking to start a second group running on Monday or Friday mornings once a month.

The meetings should help you explore your attitudes and beliefs and recent topics have included The 7 Deadly Sins, Social Roles and Ethics.

Those interested should email Mike Foster at mikef@wowu.co.uk

ENVIRONMENT GROUP

Carbon sinks were the subject for discussion at our first meeting after a break for Christmas. So what is a carbon sink and why are they important? The simplest definition of a carbon sink is that it is a reservoir of carbon that absorbs carbon in larger quantities than it releases it, and today that particularly applies to carbon dioxide.

Carbon dioxide is a greenhouse gas keeping the Earth warm by acting as a blanket that prevents too much warmth generated on Earth from escaping into the Universe. It has a crucial role in regulating global temperature.

The last time the global temperature was stable was some 200 years ago when the average temperature was about 15 degrees and the concentration of CO₂ in the atmosphere was around 280 parts per million. That has now risen to around 420 parts per million and still rising, and it will go on rising until we reach net carbon zero, possibly in 2050. Meanwhile global temperature has already warmed by more than one degree and is continuing to rise. CO₂ is not the only greenhouse gas, but it is the most important one even though it is only 0.04% of the atmosphere. This is equivalent to about three drops of water in a litre, but as was demonstrated during the presentation, if those three drops are red cooking dye the water becomes bright pink, showing that very small quantities can have a powerful effect.

There are natural carbon sinks which remove CO₂ from the atmosphere.

The three most important ones are the vegetation, the oceans and the soil, but the effectiveness of all three depends to some extent on the way we manage the land and the sea. Together they remove about two thirds of the CO₂ we are currently producing, and it appears unlikely that abandoning the use of fossil fuels will on its own, be enough to lower the concentration of CO₂ back to the level it was 200 years ago.

Capturing CO₂ from industrial processes, and removing it directly from the atmosphere are both established processes now, but the problem then becomes what to do with it.

Currently there are three man-made solutions.

CO₂ can be liquified by putting it under pressure, as in a fire extinguisher, and then it could be buried in the space created by extracting fossil fuels in the first place.

Secondly if a mixture of CO₂ and water is injected underground into basalt rock, stable carbon based compounds are produced which lock the carbon away. Basalt is commonly found in volcanic areas, and there is now an installation in Iceland that is using the energy from the hot springs to power the removal of CO₂ from the atmosphere and inject it into basalt deep under the ground.

Thirdly we produce a great deal of waste vegetation which is usually allowed to rot or is burned. In both cases large amounts of CO₂ are emitted. If waste vegetation is heated in an oxygen free atmosphere it does not burn or rot, but turns into a form of charcoal called biochar. This process does emit some carbon based inflammable gases, but much of the carbon remains as a solid, locked away in the charcoal which can be ground up and used as a soil improver.

Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) is controversial because countries and industries that extract and market fossil fuels use it as a justification for the continued extraction and use of such fuels.

Those who oppose this attitude point out that the growth of CCS may divert interest and investment away from the development of carbon free energy which many think is a safer and more reliable longterm solution.

Is there a compromise, and how or when will it be reached?

Richard Bentley

Group News

Hadrian's Wall and History Groups

Thursday January 18th the U3a Hadrians Wall group met for an indoor presentation about the Wall itself. By its very nature the group is field trip based as we visit Roman sites on and near the Wall but during the winter this is not always possible, hence we bring it into the warm welcome of the County Hotel.

What made this gathering of 'Waller's' different was that they were joined by the U3a History group who had been invited by John Sandiford the Convenor of the Hadrians Wall group. More than several 'Historians' took up the invite and enjoyed an informative well presented talk.

Afterwards there was some great 'cross party' discussion and not surprisingly rather a peak of interest in the groups to join the other (if they already weren't members of both groups.)

This collaboration between groups seems to me a very natural phenomena. We shall definitely do it again.

Carole Soulsby (History Convenor)



Coffee Morning for New Members and Prospective Members

Wednesday 14th February in the Abbey at 10.30am

All new members are warmly invited to the coffee morning in the Abbey.

It is a great opportunity to find out more about Tynedale u3a and the wide range of Groups that not only provide interesting opportunities to learn more about a diverse range of topics, but are social occasions with much laughter and friendship.

You can also find out about the Monthly Meetings, the additional Special Talks and the trips to places of interest across a wide geographical area.

If you have friends, family or acquaintances who you think might be interested in joining, please do bring them along.

Committee members will be on hand to answer any questions and very much look forward to chatting with you.





Your committee

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tyneu3achair1@btinternet.com

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A VERY WARM WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS

Sincere apologies to Keith Mavin who was incorrectly named as Kevin in the last newsletter

Richard Dixon	Judi Singleton
Clive Ward	Fenwick Purvis
Barbara Purvis	June Abbott
Elizabeth Niven	Marion Muir
Piero Alberici	Pauline Fisher
John McElroy	Jan Porteous

Next issue of the newsletter

We very much welcome written contributions and photos from groups and individual members.

Please send your contributions to the newsletter editor, Tim O'Brien, at tyneu3anleditor@gmail.com

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you.....

DEADLINE for the MARCH NEWSLETTER

22nd February 2024

Forthcoming Monthly Meetings Topics and Speakers

6 February 2024

Battle of Britain North East
Denis Fox

5 March 2024

Annual General Meeting

We do hope you have enjoyed this edition of the Newsletter

Please join us on the **Tynedale u3a Facebook** page to keep up to date with information on events, interesting comments from members and engaging photos.

Membership

541 Members

13 Associates



Follow us on Facebook